

Lafayette Historical Society

P.O. Box 133
Lafayette, CA 94549

Bulletin Vol. XIII, No. 2
President: Shirley Thomson

April 1987
Newsletter Editor: Nancy Midwood

From the President . . .

Be sure to save the evening of Tuesday, May 5; join us for our annual dinner and program.

A few days before our meeting--on May 2--our parent organization, Friends of the Lafayette Library, will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the present library building and note 125+ years of Lafayette library service. Linda Heilman, FLL Historian, believes Lafayette's subscription library service, begun about 1860, may have been "the first form of public library service in Contra Costa County."

In 1967, about a hundred years after that small subscription library began, the FLL (then the Lafayette Library Association) set up its Historical Committee. Under the leadership of Fern Davis and Joan Merryman it began the work which, since January 1971, has been carried forward through Lafayette Historical Society.

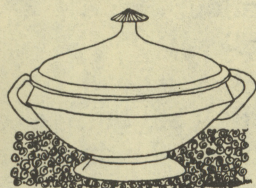
Credit for many local history preservation accomplishments over the years since 1967 goes to the good people who energetically began the work: Angela Broadhead, Ruth Dyer, Nancy Flood, Jack Hageman, Ruth Holton, Sandy Kimball, Joan Merryman, Bernice Mills, Theodore Murphy, Jane Putnam, Alice McNeil Russi with Fern Powell Davis as Chair.

We continue the effort, preserving and celebrating our *local history*: our families, our neighbors and friends, where they lived and what they did, their stories, their pictures and memorabilia, their interests, the community they built. For local history lovers--enthusiastic activists and interested onlookers--we have planned a very special Lafayette history program for May 5. Hope to see you there.

Shirley



Pioneer Store



We invite Society members and friends to join us (Tuesday, May 5, 6:00 pm). Please bring a dinner dish to serve eight people. Questions: call Richard Johnson (283-0199), Elizabeth Johnston (284-4286) or Shirley Thomson (284-2995) for further information.

Annual dues (\$5 family membership) are due in May for 1987-88.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Dick Johnson, will submit the following names at the annual meeting on May 5, 1987:

Ruth Dyer
Oliver Hamlin
Ray Peters
Irene Van Overveen

The newly elected Directors will join James Craig, Elizabeth Johnston, Shirley Thomson and Betsy Willcuts who will be serving the third year of their terms, and Lee Schell and Nancy Midwood, serving the second year of their terms.

In accordance with the Bylaws, the newly elected Board, as its first order of business, will elect from its members the officers for the 1987-88 year.

WINTER PROGRAM

Our thanks to Chairperson Elizabeth Johnston and to Jack and Margaret Schneider for a heartwarming trip down memory lane. Our winter program brought out nearly a hundred people to the Community Center on February 20 to recall how it really was in those post-war years in Lafayette.

ORAL HISTORIES NEEDED

The Society would like to accumulate more oral histories, with or without video accompaniment, of local residents. If you or a neighbor you know has an interesting bit of history to tell, we want to hear about it! Please call chairman Ollie Hamlin at 284-1446 if you have a likely candidate in mind.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BIRTHDAY FETE

The Lafayette Library, 952 Moraga Road, will be the setting for a twenty-fifth birthday celebration on May 2 at 10:00 am. Friends of the Lafayette Library have invited Ann Harlow, Director of the Hearst Gallery to speak about the William Keith Collection of oil paintings (1838-1911). There will be music, cake, a treeplanting and more!

A display of historical photos and memorabilia highlighting earlier Lafayette libraries and the opening of our present building in 1962, (arranged by Alice Breckling) will be of interest to visitors.

Everyone is welcome.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The Lafayette Historical Society is pleased to welcome the following members:

Barbara and John Bailey
Helen and Wilbur Ellis
Victoria and Frank Essart
Mary Ann and John Gilcrest
Grace and Al Gonsalves
Alverus and Dick Janssen
Isabel Marcellini
Barbara and Howard Martin
Kay and Hal Marty
Jennie and Hal Marty
Betty and John McBride, Jr.
Mary and Al McDonald
The Dave Nelsons
Marie Nogurs
The Philip Padous
Jeanne Pennell
Ruth and Wesley Rhoades
Nuha and Bahidj Sabouni
Marge and Robert Underwood
Maryann and John Zivic

Cinco de Mayo LHS - Ole!

Annual Meeting and Potluck

Tuesday, May 5, 6:00 pm
Veterans' Building, Lower Level

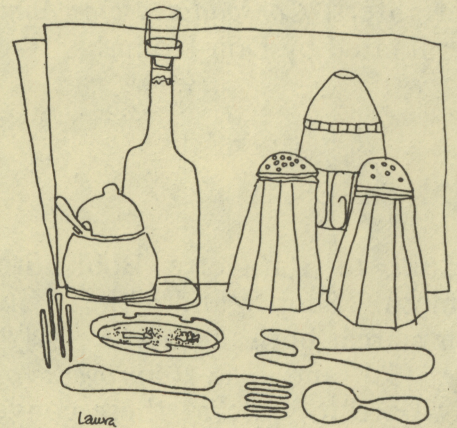
Come to the Lafayette Historical Society's annual meeting. Margaritas will be served in honor of Cinco de Mayo and a no-host bar will be open from 6:00 to 7:00 pm. The potluck dinner will be under the direction of Dick Johnson and a group of volunteers. Following the meal there will be a brief business meeting to elect Directors.

Our evening's program will highlight three special areas of history in Lafayette, by presenters who know their subjects well:

Walking Tours Slide Show
by Betsy Willcuts

History and Administration of the Cemetery
by Christine Schreiber

Bicentennial Celebrations of the Constitution
by Ray Peters



Please join us for this popular event. Guests are welcome. Bring your friends to familiarize them with LHS. Just bring a casserole or salad to serve eight. Board members and committee chairs will bring the desserts. Complimentary coffee and wine are provided.

We look forward to the pleasure of your company on May 5 at 6 o'clock.

YES, IT'S TIME FOR DUES

According to the Bylaws, our membership dues must be collected at the time of the annual General Meeting; there will be a membership table set up for that purpose. Please complete the form at the end of this newsletter and bring it to the meeting or mail the form and check (P.O. Box 133, Lafayette).

It is your support and your efforts in enlarging our membership and informing the public about us that makes it possible for our organization to work toward its goal of preserving the historical roots of our community.

PLAZA PARK BLOCK

We are pleased to be working with the Lafayette Planning Commission as a member of its new Subcommittee on the Plaza Park Block.

The resources of the Society, as always, are at the service of the community. We are naturally particularly interested in the city's consideration of long- and short-term plans for the area that includes the Plaza Park, Lafayette's oldest buildings and the creekside site of Elam Brown's mill. Shirley Thomson and Ray Peters are representing LHS.

ARCHIVES ACQUISITION:

Consolidated Fire Anniversary

The Society has acquired for its archives *Consolidated Fire Anniversary*, a history, with text and photographs of the first twenty years, from 1964 to 1984, of the 7 agencies that combined to create the Contra Costa County Consolidated Fire District. Twenty years ago the Fire District served a population of 50,000. By 1984 the population had grown to 315,000 and the District served to a 200-square mile area including 6 cities of from 3,000 to 100,000, maintained 18 stations, 268 employees and 85 reserve firefighters. *Consolidated Fire Anniversary* was coordinated by Don Hopps.

BOOK SALES

Thanks to Lafayette Book Store, Conti's Camera Shop and the Chamber of Commerce, both *LaFayette: A Pictorial History*, (\$6) and *The Improvers of Lafayette*, (\$9.95) are for sale at these convenient locations. The Society appreciates the fact that these books are sold without handling charges, so that proceed go to LHS.

Drop in soon and have some local history wrapped up for your gift-giving, plan to pick up some copies at the annual potluck on May 5.

LAFAYETTE TEACHER ALIOTO LAUDED BY BIOGRAPHER

I am reflecting through Jane Patorio Alioto's biography on creativity, charisma, and determination of the daily grass roots order. . . . Miss Patorio's top priority was serving others in order to bring pleasure and comfort into their lives. . . . To be the most important, accomplished, vivid, and kindly teacher during a child's most receptive and formative years is to personify those

qualities for a lifetime. . . . As the research progressed and I learned more about what she had done for so many people, my admiration grew: I was taken aback by her tireless capacity to nurture such a diversity of human types. . . .

The oral historian, though relatively restricted in the use of secondary sources, has nonetheless a great opportunity because most of the material is in fact not lifeless, but consists of the living, associating, remembering minds of the subject's contemporaries.

Excerpts from a lecture: "Oral History and Biography," by Joella R. Juilliard, Ph.D., printed in the *Southwest Oral History Association Newsletter*, Summer 1986, #10.

WALKING TOURS

As part of their history curriculum, all fourth grade classes in Lafayette participate in April walking tours of downtown and of the cemetery, thanks to Ruth Dyer, Betsy Willcuts, Pat Gowdy and Christine Schreiber.

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING RESCHEDULED DUE TO LABOR DAY

The first business meeting in September will be held at Shirley Thomson's, at 1062 Via Baja, at 7:30 pm, on September 15 (not on September 8). Members are welcome to attend.

BEADED EXHIBIT

An exhibition of beaded purses and costumes is at the Richmond Museum from March 1 through May 31. Hours are 1:00 to 4:00 pm, Friday and Sunday. Closed on all legal holidays. Admission free (400 Nevin Avenue, 235-7387).

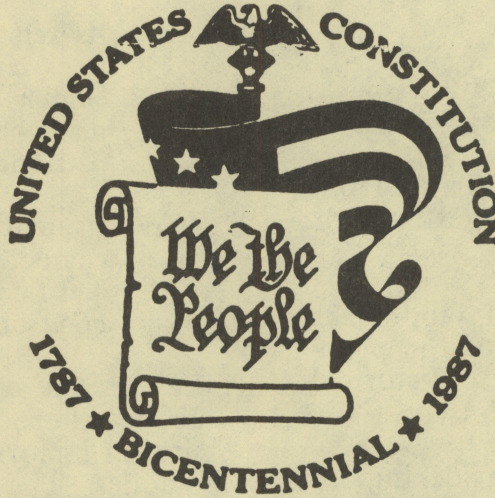
THIS IS OUR U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL

BICENTENNIAL YEAR

LET'S CELEBRATE IT, APPRECIATE IT, SUPPORT IT!

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Constitution of the United States of America. On September 17, 1787 the "Greatest Political Document In The History Of The World" was signed by our founding fathers. This "Living Document" guarantees us our liberty and freedom. In dedication to increased understanding and appreciation for the constitution and to inspire patriotism, Lafayette is celebrating the Bicentennial.

LAFAYETTE
IS AN
OFFICIALLY
DESIGNATED
BICENTENNIAL
CITY



200 YEARS
AGO
"THE MIRACLE
AT
PHILADELPHIA"

MANY MAJOR EVENTS ARE PLANNED TO CELEBRATE THE CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTION SUNDAY - APRIL 26

in most of the churches in Lamorinda and the temple, a Sunday in May for the rest.

COMMUNITY PICNIC DAY - MAY 30

A community picnic on Saturday, May 30 is planned at the Stanley School playgrounds and gym. It will feature grade schoolers' Bicentennial arts, crafts, murals, plays

Adult activities will include many demonstrations and displays. A "200-Years-Ago Pavilion" will feature quilts, crocheting, knitting, weaving, leatherwork, dolls. There will be games, chorales, bands, flag presentation, mini-lectures, oratoricals, square dances, musical groups, patriotic-historical films and displays, art displays Senior citizen "Americana", etc., plus food and refreshment booths...and you can bring your picnic basket. This great day is made possible by participation of many local service clubs and organizations.

MEMORIAL GAZEBO - SEPT. 20

To commemorate the signing of the Constitution, a permanent memorial gazebo will be built on Mt. Diablo Blvd. at Golden Gate Way, with the help of community support and contributions. Dedication ceremony is set for September 20, in conjunction with the Lafayesta parade.

LAFAYESTA PARADE - SEPT. 20

The annual Lafayesta Parade on Sunday Sept. 20 will appropriately be themed "WE THE PEOPLE...RISE TO THE CHALLENGE" and include patriotic entrants in celebration of the Bicentennial.

ESSAY/SPEECH CONTESTS

Essay, speech, art and photography contests are underway. Open to all high school students living in Lafayette, the competition is for cash prizes totaling \$4,000.

PUBLIC SPIRITED CITIZENS & ORGANIZATIONS interested in supporting or participating in the Bicentennial celebrations should contact David McDonald 283-2435 or Merv Hasselman 283-7693. For parade information contact the Chamber of Commerce 284-7404.

LAFAYETTE LANDMARKS

Preservation and protection of sites of historical interest to a community can sometimes best be ensured by conveying landmark status to that site.

Since 1976 the City of Lafayette has designated—on nomination of the Historical Society—five landmark sites:

- Plaza Park (Res. #36-76)
- Wayside Inn (Res. #36-76)
- Pioneer Store (Res. #36-76)
- Lafayette Town Hall (Res. #33-78)
- Lafayette Grammar School (Res. #85-83)

The Society is interested in hearing from members and friends with suggestions or nominations for consideration.

"Nominations for designation of landmarks may be made by (a) the owner of the property . . . or (b) the Lafayette Historical Society" (Section 6-2112).

Criteria to be applied in considering an "area, location, site, place, building, structure, work of art or similar object as a landmark," provided in Section 6-2111 of the city code, include the following:

- (a) Its character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of this City, the State of California, or the United States of America.
- (b) Its location as an area, place or site of a significant historical event.
- (c) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture, history and development of the City.
- (d) Its exemplification of the cultural, educational, economic, patriotic, social or historic heritage of the City.
- (e) Its portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

- (f) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics or an architectural type of specimens.
- (g) Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City.
- (h) Its embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.
- (i) Its relationship to other distinctive locations, areas, places, and sites which are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on a historic, educational, patriotic, cultural or architectural motif.
- (j) Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, or of the entire City.

Besides the city-designated landmarks listed above, there are presently four Lafayette sites of historical interest bearing descriptive plaques. These sites have been honored and noted by LHS and other organizations such as the DAR and Soroptimist Club.

- (a) Geils Building, 3531 Plaza Way (1971)
- (b) Bicentennial Liberty Tree, 950 Dewing (1974)
- (c) Lafayette Cemetery (1979)
- (d) Elam and Margaret Brown Homesite, 985 Hough Avenue (1981)



Way Side Inn

Lafayette Historical Society

POST OFFICE BOX 133 LAFAYETTE, CALIF. 94549

MEMBERSHIP - 1987-88

last name _____ first name _____ spouse's first name _____
street address _____ city, state, zip code _____
phone _____ date _____

ANNUAL DUES: Please check appropriate box, attach check in the amount shown and mail to Lafayette Historical Society, P.O. Box 133, Lafayette, CA 94549.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Family membership (\$5) | ☐ Business membership (\$50) |
| ☐ Student membership (\$2.50) | ☐ Life membership (\$100) |

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

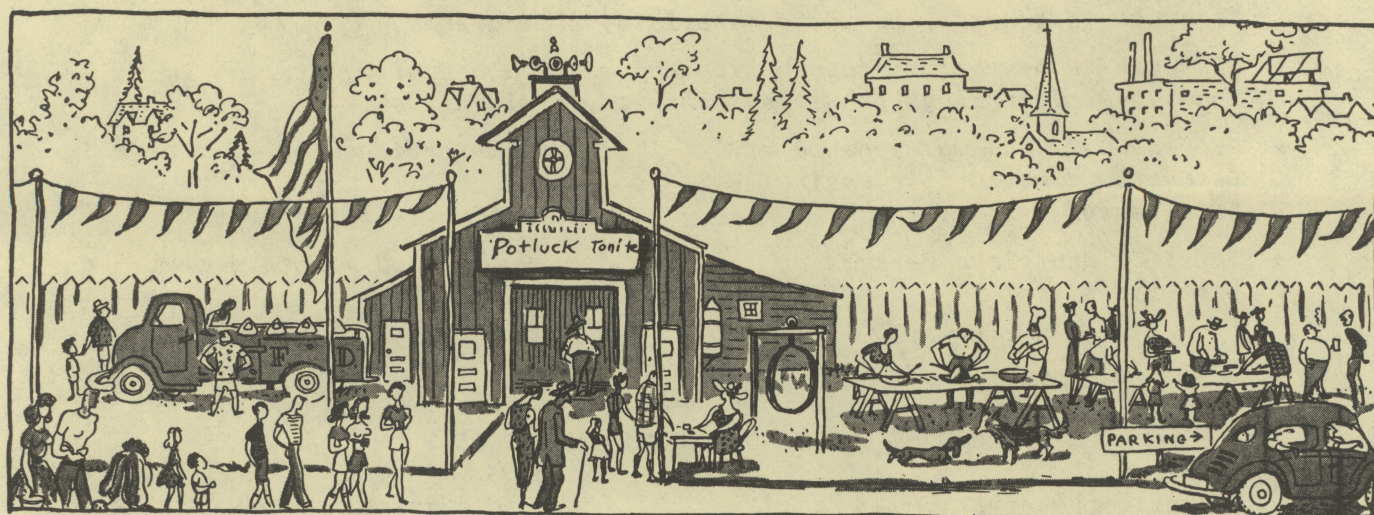
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|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Collect, preserve, and make available to researchers and the public Lafayette's records, historic materials, photographs | |
| • Disseminate historical information and encourage public interest in local history through programs, exhibits, field trips | |
| • Provide care and maintenance of Lafayette's early fire engine, "Old Betsy" | • Publications |
| • Identify and place markers at historic sites | • Conduct walking tours |
| | • Record and maintain oral histories |

PLEASE CHECK YOUR AREAS OF INTEREST

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Historic preservation | ☐ Field trips |
| ☐ Landmarks | ☐ Photograph collection |
| ☐ Oral history | ☐ Newspaper clippings |
| ☐ Research | ☐ Telephone committee |
| ☐ Typing | ☐ Annual potluck dinner |
| ☐ Other _____ | |

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Lafayette Historical Society
P.O. Box 133
Lafayette, CA 94549



MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW

Tuesday . May 5, 1987 . 6:00pm

LAFAYETTE VETERANS' HALL